

Step Ahead Preschool

418 Stribling Road
Martinsburg WV 25403
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Our Mission

Step Ahead is both owned and operated by director Lisa Carpenter, BA. The program was developed by the director, a certified West Virginia teacher. The program's purpose is to offer both teacher-directed instruction and student-directed activities that foster creativity and age appropriate learning. The center believes that children learn through hands-on activities and creative play. Step Ahead Preschool believes in treating each child as an individual with his or her own interests and needs. Our philosophy is to provide a safe environment for all children, both physically and emotionally. A child that feels loved and safe will flourish in a preschool environment.

Our program includes art, music, story time, science, social studies, math, and physical education for children two to ten years of age. This includes before and after care for Tuscarora Elementary and Eagle School Intermediate. We also offer before and after care for the children enrolled in our Berkeley County Pre-K class.

Admission Requirements

Parents may make an appointment to tour the facility. Our center accepts enrollment applications on a non-discriminatory basis. The practice of this policy is demonstrated through equal treatment in regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, handicap, and age or sexual orientation of the parents. If any complaints (gender or civil) arise, parents must give the director a written notice within two (2) weeks of the incident.

Applications for enrollment will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis.

There is a non-refundable **registration fee of \$30.00** that must be paid upon enrollment. Every September, at the beginning of our new school year, parents will be billed a **\$30.00 material fee**.

The Admission Process includes the following:

- A completed registration packet must be on file before a child may attend Preschool.
- If pre-registering, a completed registration packet must be returned in ten (10) days or by the child's first day of school.
- Signed "Parent" and "Fee" agreements
- A completed Application Form
- A health report and immunization record
- An application that has emergency information for your child. Parents must list names of people who are allowed to pick up their child, and **only** those listed will be permitted to pick up their child. If possible, parents should notify the center when someone other than themselves will be picking up their child. Please notify the people on the students' emergency list that they must bring photo identification with them. Safety is our top priority.
- A signed form stating the parents have read and agree with the policies in the Handbook, understanding the Behavior Management Plan, and were advised on the procedures of reporting child abuse.
- Parents should update the director on any changes in health or events that may influence the child. Please feel free to speak to the director, teacher, or write a note on

any changes that we may need to know about. We want to assist you if your child is having a problem. It helps to better understand behavior, mood, withdraw, or illness.

Discharge Policy:

Either party (**Parent or Step Ahead Preschool**) may terminate childcare services without prejudice, with a two weeks' **written notice**. Once a parent signs the Fee Agreement, he or she will be required to give **two weeks' notice**. **If you pre-register and later decide not to attend, you must give two weeks' notice before your child's starting date. If you fail to do so, you will be held responsible for the first two weeks' tuition.**

Programs Offered

The center is open from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm. The center is open Monday through Friday. The center offers Berkeley County Pre-K, full day childcare, and before and after school care for children between the ages of 2-12 years of age. We are State Licensed for 63 children. Parents may volunteer in their child's class. Curriculum guidelines have been established to enrich children's social-emotional, fine motor, gross motor, language, and cognitive abilities. The curriculum is set up with age-appropriate activities. Our goals for the program are as follows.

1. Children will have the opportunity to play with paint, play dough, watercolors, finger-paint, and many other art supplies.
2. School readiness- Students will be taught skills in reading, science, social studies and math. The philosophy of the center is that children learn by doing hands on activities. Learning centers will be set up to foster each child's individual interest. Children will have the opportunity to sing and play. Students will also use their large muscles in the classroom by playing various games. Students will work on fine motor skills when it is age appropriate.
3. Children will have opportunity for free play time—both inside and outside (weather permitting).
4. Children will have the opportunity to socialize with their peers.
5. Children will move up to the next appropriate classroom depending on their age and development. The director will evaluate each child to determine if they are ready to move up.
6. The Before and After School Care program serves the Tuscarora Elementary and Eagle School Intermediate.

Our objective is that our students will learn Pre-K skills and have fun in a healthy safe environment. We want the children to learn how to cooperate with other students in the classroom. We want the children to be prepared for Kindergarten, both educationally and socially.

Hours and Holidays

The center is open between the hours of 6:30am and 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. The center will be closed on seven holidays a year. If your child's scheduled date to attend school falls on any of the following holidays, you will not be charged for that day:

1. New Year's Day
2. Good Friday
3. Memorial Day
4. July 4th
5. Labor Day
6. Thanksgiving Day
7. Christmas Day

The center will close at 1:00pm on the following holidays:

1. Christmas Eve
2. New Year's Eve

These two days are considered to be "full days"- regular fee applies.

Daily Schedule

6:30- Center opens	1:00-2:30- Nap time
6:30-8:30- Free time	2:30-3:00- Snack time
8:30-9:00- Breakfast	3:00-5:30 Free play (outside & inside)
9:00-12:00- Preschool	5:30- Center closes
12:00-12:30- Lunch	
12:30-1:00 free time (this schedule will be flexible in the summer. The children will have opportunities to spend time outside playing. When the weather is nice, we would like the children to have extra time to play outside and enjoy the playground equipment.	

Fees (per day)

Programs offered

Full Day	\$28.00
Before and After	\$10.00
Before or After	\$7.00

Fees for early dismissals and delayed openings for children who are in the school-age programs are as follows:

Delayed Berkeley County School Opening	\$5.00 per day extra
Early Berkeley County School Dismissal	\$5.00 per day extra

This fee will be added to the child's weekly bill

Payments are due weekly. You may pay ahead and your payment will be in the system as a credit. Payments must be paid upon the first day of the week that the child attends. You have a grace period until Thursday at close to make your payment. After that, a late fee is charged. Tuition is due regardless of absences, holidays (except the seven holidays a year Step Ahead is closed- see page 5), vacations, or Step Ahead Preschool closing due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances. It is a set weekly tuition regardless if your child is absent. We count on your payments to pay our expenses, staff, materials for the children, and the children's meals. If fees are not paid by Thursday at close then a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged. Any account that is more than two weeks late will result in childcare services being suspended and cancelled.

If fees are not paid by the time the child withdraws from the center, **legal action** will be taken and parents will be responsible for paying **all legal fees** in settling the case.

In the event that a child is not picked up by closing time, which is 5:30pm, a charge of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes will be charged beginning at 5:35pm. There will not be any staff scheduled to stay after 5:30pm.

A fee of \$30.00 will be charged for any returned checks.

Provisions for Special Needs

We understand that all children are different in their own special way. At the time of enrollment, parents should discuss any special needs that their child may have.

When at the center your child will need:

- Change of clothes
- A blanket and pillow for naptime
- A crib size sheet for the cot

Blankets and pillowcases will be sent home on Friday to be washed.

We ask that children **DO NOT bring toys** from home. Our center offers an array of safe age appropriate toys for your child. Please do not allow your child to bring pretend guns or war toys.

We **do not allow** students to **pack their lunch**. We provide well- balanced meals for our students and we give them plenty of choices. Food for parties must come from an approved source (grocery store) because they have a license to provide such food. Due to food allergies it can be a safety issue if a child eats something another parent sent in to the school. For our summer program, the children in the school age room (5-8) are allowed to pack lunch. The food needs to fit healthy guidelines. If your child decides to pack, then Mrs. Lisa will have a meeting with the parent to go over nutrition guidelines. If a child has an allergy to food then we can make accommodations with a doctor's note, such as cow milk for soy milk.

Potty Training

If your child is in the process of being potty trained, you must attend a meeting with the teacher to discuss your child's toilet training method. Your child should participate in this meeting.

Medications and Illnesses

Only doctor prescribed medications will be administered at the center. The medicine must be in the original prescription bottle and it must list the medicine's name, child's name, and prescribed dosage to be given. Parents must fill out a permission form with their instructions before any medicine can be given. Medicine will only be given at 12:00 noon unless directed by a doctor or in the case it is an emergency medication. Please set your child's dosage schedule so it fits with our dosage time.

Students with asthma or students that need emergency medication under the following circumstances:

1. With written permission from the child's parent and licensed health care provider.
2. A child may administer asthma medication, emergency allergy medication, or other emergency medications.
3. The student must alert staff that they need the medication. The student must be trained by their physician and the parent to self-administer the medication. Parents will be notified and the medication will be logged by the staff.

We do not give non-prescription (over the counter) medication without a doctor's note.

The physician's order must include the name of medicine, the reason for the medication, the amount to be given, and the dates it may be given. By state law, we may only give non-prescription medicine no more than 3 consecutive days within a 30-day period. If your child needs non-prescription medicine for a longer period of time, you must have written instruction by a physician. We have forms that the doctor can fill out that will allow us to administer the medication.

The exception to the rule is that we can use non-prescription ointments, creams, or lotions without written consent from a physician. We can use them no more than 5 consecutive days in a 30- day period. We must have physician written instructions before using topical Benadryl.

Parents must attach a note to the original non-prescription bottle that states the child's first and last name, specific directions for administration including appropriate dosage based on weight or age, how it is to be stored, and verify the medication will not expire during the time given.

The center does not give medications that contain aspirin or codeine in them.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick your child up immediately. Children may not attend school if they have diarrhea, vomiting, excessive coughing, fever of 100 + or anything communicable (such as strep throat, "pink eye", chicken pox, etc.).

Parents must fill out a medical authorization form so that medical attention can be provided in case of an emergency. A staff member will accompany the child until the parents arrive.

Parents must notify the center if they have any objections to treatment or limitation to medical treatment. In an emergency or life-threatening situation, Step Ahead Preschool would make the decision to seek medical treatment. Parents would be notified and a staff member would stay with your child until you arrive.

Children that would be excluded from the program during an outbreak of a reportable communicable disease would be:

1. The child that is ill with the communicable disease, a doctor must write a note releasing them to attend school.
2. Any child that is not vaccinated or is only partially vaccinated from such disease.

Transportation

Public school buses will transport students to and from Tuscarora Elementary School and Eagle School Intermediate.

Behavior Management

The center prohibits corporal punishment on its premises by either parent or staff member.

The center will use a positive reinforcement approach to discipline. The staff will praise and reward good behavior. If positive reinforcement or redirection does not work, then time outs will be given. Time outs are given according to age. Children over the age of 2 will receive one minute for each year they are old. For example, a child that is three will receive a 3-minute time out. If misbehavior continues, a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled. Parents and teachers will develop a plan of action to provide the child with alternatives to inappropriate behavior. If the child's inappropriate behavior continues, we reserve the right to temporarily or permanently suspend the child's right to attend the center.

Child Abuse and State Regulations

The definition of child abuse and neglect is: physical injury, mental or emotional injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, the sale or the attempted sale, or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a parent, guardian, or custodian responsible for the child's welfare.

The center reports suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services. The number for Child Protective Services is 1-800-352-6513.

Parents may view the State Licensing Regulations. It is located in the office, near the dry erase board. A parent has the right to report violations to the secretary of DHHR. The number is 1-800-558-1885.

Security and Safety

The center provides a coded door that will only allow access to the parents and staff. All parents will receive a personal code they create at the time of enrollment. At the time of withdrawal, the code will be removed. Other visitors will have to show photo identification to enter the center. If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, make sure that you inform the person that they must have a photo ID with them. Only the child's parents or guardians will be able to access the coded door. If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, they **must** ring the buzzer so that the receptionist can check their identification. Your child's **safety** is our **top priority**. Parents have access to their child, regardless of the time of day. Parents should feel free to come in at any time. We do routine fire drills, in case of an event that we would have to evacuate. We would exit through the gate or the closest exit and walk to the paved area in front of Printing Impressions. You will be contacted. If we need to evacuate the area we would be transported by the Pan Tran or emergency services to Independent Bible Church 2306 Hedgesville Road Martinsburg, WV 25403. Please keep your contact information updated. Evacuation plans are in the back of your packet.

Firearms are not allowed in the building unless carried by regulatory or law enforcement professional in the line of duty. This includes projectile weapons, pellet gun, BB guns, darts, cap guns, bows and arrows, sling shots, and paint ball guns.

It is state law that you be informed that drawstrings on children's clothing pose a risk for strangulations. We must remove and secure such drawstrings before participating in activities.

Step Ahead Preschool carries liability Insurance.

Volunteers

Long-term volunteers must receive orientation on Step Ahead Preschool policies before they are allowed to volunteer in the classroom. Volunteers must be trained on policies such as emergency plans, behavior management, confidentiality, child abuse, cleanliness, security and all other staffing policies. Long-term volunteers must have a TB assessment and a background check.

We do not take field trips. We do not have the transportation.

Child/staff ratio

<u>Children's age</u>	<u>Staff</u>
2 years to 3 years	1 adult to 8 children
3 years to 4 years	1 adult to 10 children
4 years to 5 years	1 adult to 12 children
School Age	1 adult to 16 children

Confidentiality and Information Disclosure

The center will keep all information about children and shall disclose only to Staff members caring for the child in accordance to the Center's policies and procedures. All students' records will stay on the premises. Records will be destroyed three (3) years after the child's discharge. The center shall obtain written consent before disclosing information to any other person other than Staff or representatives of the Department of Health and Human Resources. We use destroy all records.

Grievance Policy

If any parent has a concern or a complaint about the program or a staff member, the parent may contact the director. We want the center to provide the best care possible, we want the parents to feel free to talk to the director about any concerns they may have. Parents should report any incidents or concerns right away.

Amendments

The center reserves the right to revise the parent handbook with written notification to the parent.